



# Esprit de Corps

A Bulletin of the Washington Service Corps

*Washington State*  
**SERVICE CORPS**  
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT

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## Special SERVES Edition



Each program year, the Washington Service Corps conducts an exciting learning event for all members.

Called the SERVES Institute, it is a conference that offers training workshops, disaster preparedness training and networking with peers, trainers and supervisors.

With approximately 850 AmeriCorps and VISTA members attending from across Washington state, SERVES has something for everyone.

The workshops are great opportunities to get professional

training in a variety of areas. Members learn more about themselves, grow as leaders, and learn about other programs and volunteer opportunities. Networking with others offers the chance to learn from other members' challenges and successes.

SERVES offers training that helps members set goals during their year of service, as well as for life after AmeriCorps.

Session topics include learning to work in culturally diverse communities, becoming a great reading tutor, learning to be a lively group facilitator, being an active volunteer recruiter, and becoming a knowledgeable and proficient grant writer.

All AmeriCorps and VISTA members of the Washington Service Corps are exceptional individuals who deserve the best training possible.

Taking into consideration members' budgets, time constraints, livelihoods and priorities, the SERVES Institute is typically held in the central part of the state and the Washington Service Corps provides all lodging and meals for the duration of the workshops.

The SERVES Institute gives members the support and training needed to gain the best results during a term of service. Not only do members enhance their skills, and develop professionally and personally, they also can meet lifelong friends.

## What does SERVES mean?

**Skills:** to develop skills we need to serve our communities

**Education:** to educate ourselves so that our service is based on proven “best practices”

**Resources:** to identify, obtain, and use the abundance of resources available to us

**Volunteers:** to ensure that our volunteers, once recruited, are trained and retained in meaningful service experiences

**Empowerment:** to give “voice” to members and support self actualization

**Synergy:** to create an environment where the total effect of our service is greater than the sum of individual efforts



## Learn how to get the most from your education award

This year, back by popular demand, is Brandon Rogers, who will be doing workshops on how best to use your education award. On Wednesday, October 26 in the main convention center ballroom, at 8:30 a.m. Brandon will deliver his workshop “College Funding - How to Maximize Your Education award and your AmeriCorps Experience”. Because these workshops are always overflowing, we are making sure there is plenty of room this year! This will be a 90-minute workshop and during the second 90-minute workshop block (10:30—12:00 p.m.) Brandon will be available for one-on-one consultations with members who have concerns and/or questions regarding their specific situation.

Brandon will also be delivering “Grad School Funding - How to Maximize your Education award and Your AmeriCorps Experience” on Thursday, October 17 in the main convention center ballroom at 8:30 a.m. This, too, will be a 90-minute workshop and during the second 90-minute workshop block (10:30—12:00 p.m.) Brandon will be available for one-on-one consultations with members who have concerns and/or questions regarding their specific situation.

# Core training requirements for AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps\*VISTA members

The Washington Service Corps requires its members to have training in several key categories:

- AmeriCorps Affiliation & Program Orientation
- Cultural Competency
- Service Project Planning
- Effective Communication
- Teambuilding
- Volunteer Recruitment, training and management
- Personal Disaster Preparedness
- First Aid/CPR and Disaster Shelter Operation  
OR

- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training

Only three of these topics (AmeriCorps Affiliation, First Aid/CPR and CERT Training) are not offered at SERVES.

It's important for individually-placed members to be aware of these training requirements and make the most of meeting the requirement by attending workshops at SERVES.

Team-based programs may receive much of this training at their local sites. For those that have received the core trainings prior to SERVES, check out other workshops such as:

- Building a Vision for Yourself and Your Project;
- Grant Writing;

- How Big is Your Ecological Footprint?

No matter whether you're a team-based or individually-placed member; 1st, 2nd or 3rd year member - there's a workshop for everyone. This year, we've built in some self-care workshops as well:

- Life in Balance—Avoiding Burnout and Nourishing a Soul in Service
- Driving and Riding the Energy Bus
- Creative Development and Personal Renewal for those in Service



## **SHOW YOUR TEAM SPIRIT**

During the opening session of SERVES, we will be conducting a “roll call” of the various programs, projects and sites. There are distinct groups of members: WSC team-based projects, WA Reading Corps project, VISTA members and individual placements. VISTA and Individual placement members will be announced as a group, rather than by individual sites. No matter which group you fall into, members are welcome to make and bring signs, banners, and/or posters designating your project site and/or team. Be prepared to represent and make some noise when your program is called!



## Meet your new WA Service Corps Leaders



Constance Statham, AmeriCorps Leader,  
Individual Placement Program

I hail from the frosty mountains of Vermont where I spent time looking at small things under microscopes, playing in the snow and eating syrup on snow (it's amazing!).

My experience with AmeriCorps and Washington began simultaneously when I moved from my home state to begin a position as Patient Navigator with Sea Mar Community Health Centers. I am excited to provide the Individual Placement program members with support, resources and enthusiasm through their year of service.

I served last year as an AmeriCorps member in the WorkSource Lewis County office.

As an AmeriCorps/Reading Corps Leader, I would like to offer my support to new members in helping children become confident readers, plan and carry out creative ways to involve the community and lastly, to mark a path of service for years to follow.

I look forward to the coming year and this new experience.



Yesenia Mendez, AmeriCorps Leader, WA  
Reading Corps



Christen Cannon, VISTA Leader, Ready\*Corps and  
VISTA Individual Placement programs

I am thrilled to be joining Washington Service Corps as the new VISTA Leader. Having served as a VISTA on pilot projects with Communities In Schools of Florida and Habitat for Humanity Seattle/SKC, I understand both the incredible rewards and challenges that are bound up in the experience of VISTA service. I look forward to supporting you, gathering your stories, promoting your success, and providing information and resources as needed. Thank you for your commitment to the vital work of eradicating poverty in our communities. Let's make this a great year of getting things done!

# Disaster Preparedness, the Corporation for National Service and the WA Service Corps (WSC)

Disasters strike throughout the United States each year, bringing massive property destruction and disrupting millions of lives. While Corporation programs have always supported disaster preparedness and response efforts, they have played a much broader and more extensive role in recent years. This experience has demonstrated that national service participants can fulfill a wide range of preparedness and response roles: management and coordination of volunteers and resources, training and development of coordinated response plans and providing direct service to affected communities.

To help meet these responsibilities and better position the Corporation to provide leadership to volunteer management and preparedness efforts, in June 2007, the Corporation's Board of Directors designated disaster preparedness and response as an agency strategic initiative. The intent is to build national, state and local response capacity to use volunteers and plan effectively to provide volunteer support when, where and how it is needed.

## Corporation Targets for 2011:

- Program participants who are certified in disaster-related training;
- Program participants who are available for deployment in support of local, state, or other disasters;
- Community members who receive disaster preparedness information or training from Corporation program participants.

As part of that initiative, the WSC developed core competencies in their training plan for members that included: personal disaster preparedness, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training and/or First Aid/CPR and

American Red Cross Shelter Operations training.

Our goal is to have the almost 850 members in the WSC programs be prepared for disasters and able to be a resource to their communities in times of disaster. Whether it's developing your own personal preparedness plan, helping community members develop their preparedness plans, or actively volunteering with your local Red Cross, everyone can benefit from preparedness training.

At SERVES, you will be able to attend personal disaster preparedness training, which runs consecutively throughout the program, in 90-minute sessions.

You will also have an opportunity to attend Red Cross shelter operations training, which is a half-day training, also running throughout the conference.

With these two workshops, you are more than halfway to meeting your requirement for the disaster preparedness training.

Pre-registration IS required for emergency shelter operations, so don't forget to submit your registration if you want to attend!



## American Red Cross Shelter Operations & More

For many years now, the WSC Ready\*Corps program has partnered with American Red Cross Chapters across the State. This has been a very successful partnership, that has grown in size over the last two program years. In 2009, the American Red Cross was predominant at SERVES, training over 900 members in shelter operations. Due to the threat of flooding from the Howard Hansen Dam in King County, Seattle Red Cross staff gave part of the presentation at the opening SERVES on what it would mean if the Dam were to flood and how far reaching the effects could be.

Even though the imminent threat of that particular issue has passed, there still remains a need for individuals and organizations to be prepared to face whatever nature may throw at us! One way to do that is to take advantage of training and opportunities the Red Cross offers. Since its founding in 1881, the American Red Cross has been the nation's premier emergency response organization. As part of a worldwide movement that offers neutral humanitarian care to the victims of war, the American Red Cross distinguishes itself by also aiding victims of devastating natural disasters. Over the years, the organization has expanded its services, always with the aim of preventing and relieving suffering.

Today, in addition to domestic disaster relief, the American Red Cross offers compassionate services in five other areas: community services that help the needy; support and comfort for military members and their families; the collection, processing and distribution of lifesaving blood and blood products; educational programs that promote health and safety; and international relief and development programs.

The American Red Cross is where people mobilize to help their neighbors—across the street, across the country, and across the world—in emergencies. Each year, in communities large and small, victims of some 70,000 disasters turn to neighbors familiar and new—the more than half a million volunteers and 35,000 employees of the Red Cross. Through nearly 700 locally supported chapters, more than 15 million people gain the skills they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their homes, communities and world.

It is the WSC's hope that those of you that take Shelter Operations at SERVES as part of your required training will want to know more and want to be more involved. This is an excellent way to find out about just a small piece of what the Red Cross does and ways that you can be a resource to your local community. We encourage members to continue with the training the Red Cross offers through their local chapter, and to even sign up to be a volunteer in their community. From an apartment fire where residents are displaced, to earthquakes in Haiti, the Red Cross is there to support individuals and families that need assistance. For more information, contact your local Red Cross chapter. To find the closest chapter, please visit: <http://www.redcrosswashington.org/>.





# Important Things to Know About SERVES

- SERVES is a mandatory training event for all members within the WSC programs.
- SERVES is being held October 25-27, 2011 at the Yakima Convention Center in Yakima, WA and attendees will be housed in several of the closest hotels.
- The Institute will begin at 11:00—1:00 p.m. with a combined registration and lunch. Members can pick up their conference materials and proceed into the ballroom to enjoy lunch while reviewing the program and workshop schedule. Team-based project supervisors will have a packet of registration materials for their members and can distribute them during this time.
- **October 25th is payday, so if you do not have direct deposit, please make arrangements for the deposit of your check while you are away.**
- Members are paired two to a room, by gender, for lodging. Should you have issues with your lodging, please see Terri Jack, Conference Coordinator.
- Meals are served buffet style, with specific sections established for vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free food.
- The WSC provides meal choices with meat as well as vegetarian and vegan options. Due to the large size of our program, we cannot provide for all special dietary needs. Special dietary needs are the responsibility of the individual.
- SERVES is an alcohol-free environment.



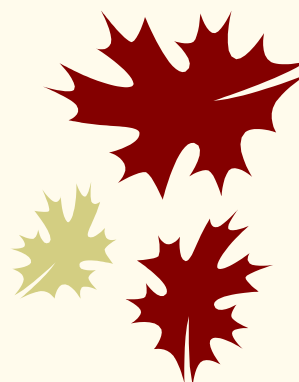
## Networking Opportunities

Did you look at a lot of different positions on the AmeriCorps website before applying? What made you choose the site you did?

One of the great things about attending SERVES is the opportunity to meet members from other sites and other locations in the state. To help foster the spirit of networking, we encourage you to sit at meals with members that you might not know and learn about the service they are providing.

If your team is one that has members spread out over a geographic area, SERVES may be one of the few times you are all together and therefore you WANT to sit with your teammates. During your workshops, you will have members from a variety of programs attending with you. Make a point to introduce yourself and tell other members something about your project, or why you decided to serve a year in National Service.

Oftentimes, a member will decide to serve a second year because of a project they heard about through another member, or at SERVES. Help spread the word about the great things going on at your site and inspire someone to want to serve there too!



## Upcoming Important Dates and Events

October 25-27, 2011 SERVES Institute

November 11, 2011 Veteran's Day

November 24-25, 2011 Thanksgiving Holiday

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